

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A composite material for producing a layer of a disposable absorbent hygienic article that comes into physical contact with the body, made of at least two non-woven material layers joined by thermal processing, where the upper layer for physical contact with the body is formed of a mixture of mono-component fibers and bi-component fibers and the percentage of bi-component fibers amounts to 30 - 70 % by weight of the upper layer, and where the denier of the fibers of the upper layer is at most 3.5 dtex, and where the lower layer includes at least 40 % by weight of bi-component fibers whose higher melting component is made of PET and whose lower melting component has a lower melting point than that of the mono-component fibers of the upper layer, and where the denier of the bi-component fibers of the lower layer is between 4 and 10 dtex.

2. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the upper layer for physical contact with the body has a textured pattern created by calendering, where the percentage of the textured surface comprises 5 to 30 % of the total surface.

3. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 2, wherein the percentage of the textured surface comprises 15 to 25 % of the total surface.

4. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the surface weight of the upper layer is about 10 to 30 g/m².

5. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 4, wherein the surface weight of the upper layer is about 15 to 20 g/m².

6. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the fibers of the upper layer are one of hydrophilic and made supple to be permanently hydrophilic.

7. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the lower layer comprises at least 60 % by weight bi-component fibers whose higher melting component is made of PET.

8. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 7, wherein the lower layer comprises at least 80 % by weight bi-component fibers whose higher melting component is made of PET.

9. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 8, wherein the lower layer consists of 100 % of bi-component fibers whose higher melting component is made of PET.

10. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the bi-component fibers of the lower layer with PET as higher melting component is a sheath/core fiber.

11. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 10, wherein the sheath/core fiber has a core positioned eccentrically to the longitudinal center direction of the fiber.

12. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 11, wherein the denier of the sheath/core fiber is 5 to 8 dtex.

13. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 12, wherein the denier of the sheath/core fiber is 6 to 7 dtex.

14. (Previously Presented) The composite material in accordance with claim 1, wherein the lower melting component of the bi-component fiber present at least 40 % by weight in the lower layer is made of polyethylene.

15. (Previously Presented) An absorbent hygienic article with a fluid-tight layer not in physical contact with a body during use, a retaining element and a fluid-permeable layer furnished on a side of the retaining element in physical contact with the body, wherein the layer furnished on the fluid-permeable side of the retaining element in physical contact with the body comprises a composite material in accordance with claim 1.

16. (Previously Presented) An absorbent hygienic article having a fluid-tight layer not in physical contact with the body during use, a retaining element and a fluid-permeable layer provided on the side of the retaining element in physical contact with the body, where the retaining element comprises one layer of intralinked cellulose fibers with a fluid retention value which is derived from the quotients of the mass (g_{Fl}) of the fluid absorbed and the dry mass (g_{Fiber}) of the cellulose fibers and is between 0.6 and 0.9 g_{Fl}/g_{Fiber} , wherein the layer of intralinked cellulose fibers contains 8 - 15 % by weight of superabsorbent polymer materials, where the fluid-permeable layer provided on the side of the retaining element in physical contact with the body is at least double-layered and an upper of the double layers consists of fibers with a denier of at most 3.5 dtex, while a lower of the double layers comprises bi-component fibers with a denier between 4 and 10 dtex whose higher melting component is made of PET.

17. (Previously Presented) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with claim 16, wherein the retaining element has in addition a layer of non-meshed cellulose fibers with a fluid retention value which is made up of the quotients of the mass (g_{Fl}) of the fluid absorbed and the dry mass (g_{Fiber}) of the

cellulose fibers and is between 1.0 and 1.4 $\text{g}_{\text{FI}}/\text{g}_{\text{Fiber}}$ and at least 20 % by weight of superabsorbent polymer materials.

18. (Previously Presented) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with claim 17, wherein the additional layer of the retaining element is disposed under the layer of intramashed cellulose fibers.

19. (Currently Amended) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with claim 18, wherein the additional layer has a ~~layer-like~~ layered area on the side not in physical contact with the body in use which is free of superabsorbent materials.

Claim 20 (cancelled).